



Hallmark of
The Goldsmiths' Company
since 1300



The
GOLDSMITHS'
Company

ASSAY OFFICE

Expert Services





Assistance to Trading Standards and other enforcement authorities

The combination of hallmarking and strong enforcement of the Hallmarking Act (1973) has been vital for effective protection of the consumer and trade.

The Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office has an unparalleled record of assisting Trading Standards and other enforcement authorities and many successful prosecutions have been achieved. We believe passionately in these joint endeavours and continue to provide support through a dedicated Trading Standards liaison officer.

We are frequently Consumer Direct's first recommendation for jewellery complaints and issues and have worked with the International Anti Counterfeiting Group (IACG), Consumer Education Liaison Group (CELG), Local Government Regulation, formerly known as LACORS and the Trading Standards Institute (TSI).

Two main areas of assistance are provided:

1. Full assistance from inspection to prosecution

- Accompanying Trading Standards officers on visits to premises
- Inspection of stock for compliance
- Identification of hallmarks
- Product testing at base (Non-destructive compositional analysis as well as full laboratory testing back-up)
- Detailed reporting
- Section 9 witness statements
- Intelligence gathering and monitoring

2. Specialist training for Trading Standards Officers

The following training sessions can be individually tailored:

- Full day seminars at Goldsmiths' Hall or Trading Standards regional headquarters (for 30 people or more)
- Small group training sessions (3 hours, around 6 people)

Antique Plate Committee

The Antique Plate Committee (APC) examines suspect silver articles and advises the Assay Office on the genuineness of hallmarks and whether there has been an illegal alteration or addition.

Since 1478, the hallmark has included a distinctive date letter indicating the year of hallmarking. The temptation to make an article appear older than it is by using counterfeit punches, or by transferring a genuine hallmark from an antique to a modern article has proved too great for some.

This is an offence under the Hallmarking Act (1973). It is also an offence to alter a hallmarked article without the written permission of an assay office. Articles altered legitimately bear an 'additions' mark, indicating the year of alteration.

The APC comprises ten expert members, including dealers, academics and collectors who serve for a fixed term. The Committee is supported by an extended panel of volunteers who report and inspect potential problems in the trade.

An article may be submitted to the APC free of charge. A Notice of Procedure is available from our website.



Chalice and paten with counterfeit hallmarks

Educational seminars

We offer a wide range of educational seminars and services for all levels of the craft and industry. See our news and events page for forthcoming events.

As well as our standard educational seminars outlined below, we can also provide bespoke training courses and seminars. We have provided training for many overseas assay offices and also hosted tailored training seminars for many of our customers both at their premises and at Goldsmiths' Hall.

Hallmarking information seminars

Our renowned Hallmarking Information Seminars offer a comprehensive, hands-on guide to hallmarking.

These day-long seminars are tailored towards our customers' needs, whether a retailer, wholesaler or artist craftsman. Delegates leave with a greater understanding of hallmarking and the law surrounding it and the foresight to use hallmarking as a marketing tool and to enhance reputation. A tour of the Assay Office is often included in the schedule.



Fakes and forgeries seminars

The possibility of overlooking a fake or forged piece of silver or jewellery continues to challenge experts, curators and collectors. Our Fakes and Forgeries Seminar shows how scientific methodology, connoisseurship and hallmarking can all be brought together to uncover the art of the faker and forger. These one day events comprise a series of informative talks by experts from the antiques trade and the Assay Office in the morning, followed by a chance to handle fakes and forgeries in a series of tables sessions in the afternoon. Each table is chaired by a renowned expert. These seminars are held in Goldsmiths' Hall and other prestigious venues throughout the world. They are often themed to cover faking of antique silver, jewellery or contemporary fakes.

Lectures and tours

We provide presentations and tours of the Assay Office to interested parties. We also visit students at jewellery and silversmithing colleges to talk about hallmarking.

For further information contact:

The Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office
Goldsmiths' Hall
Gutter Lane
London
EC2V 8AQ
T: 020 7606 8971
F: 020 7814 9353
info@assayofficelondon.co.uk
www.assayofficelondon.co.uk